



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson

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By Alex Slemc This summer, Indians fans of all ages have a chance to mix the fundamentals of baseball with good, clean fun. Check out what the Tribe has to offer for those who are interested in sharpening their baseball skills.
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by Jim Ingraham Imagine, trying to perform the most difficult skill in baseball—backwards! Hitting a 90mph small round moving target with a wooden bat is so tough that Hall of Famers were only successful three out of 10 times—and few could do it from both sides of the plate. Not naturally ambidextrous, three Tribe members persevered through countless frustrations and learned to be successful Major League switch hitters.
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by Jim Ingraham He's so unassuming, so soft spoken, so nice; you wonder if the intense competitor you see on the mound is truly the same guy in the interview you just watched. Whatever he may be feeling inside rarely shows. He just goes about being the Tribe's winningest pitcher of the nineties as if it were just another day at the office.
- 54 **Traveling With The Tribe**
by Tom Bochenek A behind-the-scenes look at life on the road with the Indians. You'll learn it's more than just a ballgame.
- 64 **The Gatekeepers...**
by Tom Bochenek Affectionately known as the dynamic duo, Joe Corrado and Angelo Muraco have been standing guard since 1990. As ballpark ushers, they have been with the club for even longer—since 1949 and 1977 respectively! To them, their job isn't really work at all... it's pleasure.

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See What It's Like To Be A Reporter!

All-Sport and Smucker's have again teamed up with the Indians to give young Tribe fans a chance to meet and talk with Kenny Lofton!

Every Saturday home game at Jacobs Field, a group of children are selected randomly upon entering the Ballpark to participate in a special Press Conference where they have the opportunity to meet and talk with Tribe players.

Kenny Lofton, who majored in TV production and communications in college, plays "host" of the show, and invites one special guest player to take the stage during each taping. Lofton also talks to kids about the importance of having goals, staying in school, and staying away from drugs.

"I try to let kids know that there is more out there than trouble," the Indians centerfielder said.

"Pro athletes have a unique opportunity to make an impact on children, and Kenny accepts that responsibility," said

Bob DiBiasio, Indians Vice President of Public Relations.

Many of the kids in the audience are guests of Lofton, who buys tickets for inner city children that may never get to see a game at Jacobs Field.

The "conference" is held in the Press Interview Room on the Service Level at Jacobs Field from 11:45am-12:15pm.

Portions of the program are replayed on the JumboTron during the Indians pre-game show the following Sunday. Participants receive a special press pass and an autographed certificate of participation.

So plan to arrive at the Ballpark early on your next Saturday visit and you could be chosen to get in on the fun!



Photo credit: Gregory Drezdson, both photos

Indians Sign 1996 June Draft Pick—Danny Peoples

Once you have a little power, you always want more. That's exactly what the Indians got this year after selecting University of Texas **1B DANNY PEOPLES** with the 28th pick in the 1996 June draft.

"Cliff Gustafson told me this kid is the best power hitter ever to come through Texas, and *Baseball America* said he is the #1 power hitter in college this year," said Indians Scouting Director Jay Robertson. "I think Danny fits with what we look for in our system. He has the work ethic, desire, determination, size, and strength."

Peoples, a junior, set a Southwest Conference record in '96 with 47 RBI during the 24-game SWC regular season and ended with 17 HR, the third highest total in University of Texas history. He led the Longhorns with 17 HR, 86 RBI, and a .741 slugging percentage. In three seasons at Texas, Danny hit .338 with 32 HR and 186 RBI in 538 at-bats.

The Indians signed Peoples just three days after drafting him, showing his enthusiasm of playing for the Indians. "In this day and age," said Robertson, "it's surprising we were able to get this contract done so quickly. He's an exceptional kid."

"The way I saw it, I wasn't going to haggle over \$100,000 or \$150,000," Peoples said. "I can make that up when I get to the big leagues. I want to get started."

Initially, Peoples will report to Tribe minicamp in Winter Haven, Florida. On June 17, he will report to Class A



Watertown of the New York-Penn League.

Peoples played first base for the Longhorns, but the Indians plan to switch him to third base or left field.

"Most likely," Robertson said, "left field is where he'll end up. We need a right-handed bat at third or the outfield, and Danny is very open to trying it."

Danny is in good company with other Tribe No. 1 draft picks. Here are the Tribe's five previous top picks and how they are doing now:

1995— David Miller, 23rd choice from Clemson. He has been converted to an outfielder and is hitting .280 with 4 HR and 26 RBI at Class A Kinston.

1994— Jaret Wright, 10th choice from Katelia High School, Anaheim, CA. Jaret is 4-4 with a 2.53 ERA in 13 starts at Kinston.

1993— Daron Kirkreit, 11th choice from University of California-Riverside.

On the Indians 40-man roster. Started for Canton-Akron and Kinston in 1995 before undergoing rotator cuff surgery. Currently working out at the Tribe's extended spring training facility in Winter Haven.

1992— Paul Shuey, 2nd round choice from the Univ. of North Carolina. Paul was recently recalled from AAA Buffalo where he struck out 57 batters in 33.1 IP while only walking nine.

1991— Manny Ramirez, 13th choice from George Washington H.S. in New York City. He is the Indians starting right fielder in his third Major League season.



**Now,
That's A**

By Jim Ingraham

There are 228 players enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Only seven of them are switch hitters.

That's not counting the seven pitchers who are officially listed as switch hitters, but were really just switch swingers, switch gropers, or switch lookers.

Not switch hitters.

The fine art of switch hitting is one of baseball's most elegant nuances. Most players are unable to hit well enough from one side of the plate to make it to the Majors. Switch hitters achieve that, times two.

Switch hitters are big league hitters from both sides of the plate. Left-handed and right-handed. Doesn't matter. Opposing teams rarely change pitchers when a switch hitter is at the plate. There's no point in doing so. Switch hitters can hit from either side.

In no other sport can you find a comparable form of athleticism to what a switch hitter does.

There aren't any place kickers in football who can kick field goals with either foot. There are no basketball players who shoot free throws right-handed sometimes and left-handed other times.

For that matter, there aren't any pitchers who throw left-handed to some batters and right-handed to others.

Only the switch hitter does what he does in two different ways.

The most famous switch hitter, of course, was Mickey Mantle. Pete Rose isn't far behind. And Eddie Murray is probably baseball's third most well-known switch hitter.

How many switch hitters are there in the Major Leagues? More than you might think. Of all the players who had at least one at-bat in the Major Leagues in 1995, 108 were switch hitters: 56 in the American League and 52 in the National League.

"It seems like there are more switch hitters today than there were 20 years ago," says Indians hitting coach Charlie Manuel. "I think what happened was that 20 years ago parents had seen switch hitters like Mantle and Rose, and they encouraged their kids to learn to switch hit because of that."

Indians third base coach Jeff Newman is one of those parents.

"Growing up, Mickey Mantle was one of the players I idolized," he says. "So when I started raising my kids, I tried to teach them to become switch hitters. Being a switch hitter is also the quickest way to the big leagues, so that's a factor, too."

Of course, saying you're going to become a switch hitter and becoming one are two completely different propositions.

The cliché "easier said than done" was never more true.

Most switch hitters who reach the big leagues became switch hitters after they began playing professionally, but before they reached the big leagues. There's too much at stake at the big league level for a team to have the luxury of allowing a player to learn how to become a switch hitter.

Switch hitters generally have two common characteristics: they learned to switch hit in the minor leagues, and they probably started out as right-handed hitters, who learned to hit left-handed well enough to become a switch hitter.

"The only negative in becoming a switch hitter is the long time it takes to complete the process," says Tribe farm director Mark Shapiro. "It's not something that can be accomplished overnight—and for the player, it can get very discouraging at times."

Omar Vizquel, one of three switch hitters on the Indians (Murray and Carlos Baerga are the others), admits that his conversion into being a switch hitter did not come easy.

"There were times when I wanted to quit trying," Vizquel says. "But I'm glad I stuck with it. If I hadn't become a switch hitter, I probably would have never become an everyday player in the big leagues."

Vizquel became a switch hitter following the 1988 season, his last season in the minor leagues. He was with the Seattle organization at the time, and fit the profile for a player being turned into a switch hitter.

"Most guys you try to turn into switch hitters are speed guys who are right-handed hitters," Shapiro says. "By making them a switch hitter, they hit left-handed the majority of the time, which puts them a step closer to first base. Sometimes it can add 30 to 40 hits to a guy's average per year."

Vizquel was just that kind of player in 1988, when Mariners hitting coach Bobby Tolan came



SWITCH!

"The pitch that gives a left-handed hitter the most trouble is the stuff thrown inside by a left-handed pitcher. If you're a switch hitter, that problem is eliminated."
— Charlie Manuel, Indians Hitting Coach

up with the idea to turn him into a switch hitter.

"The reason they wanted me to try," Vizquel says, "was that I wasn't a very good right-handed hitter."

Vizquel went to the instructional league in the fall of 1988 and began switch hitting. Then he played winter ball in Venezuela and continued to work at it.

"It was very tough to learn," he says. "It's not something you learn in one day. You need to get a lot of at-bats."

Vizquel's discouragement was not unusual.

"One of the biggest obstacles is that the player has to want to make the commitment, and he has to realize that it's going to involve a tremendous amount of failure," Shapiro says.

Many kids today don't like that idea at all.

"Kids don't want to experience failure, so they fight it," says Tribe Scouting Director Jay Robertson.

A major advantage is that a switch hitter never has to face a pitcher who throws from the same side that he hits from. Shapiro says right-handed hitters who have a tendency to bail out against right-handed pitchers are candidates for switch hitting.

In addition to being able to see the ball out of the pitcher's hand better, a switch hitter also has an advantage in that the pitcher's breaking ball is always breaking into him—not away from him. For example, a right-handed pitcher's curveball or slider would break away from a right-handed

hitter, but toward a lefthander.

"The pitch that gives a left-handed hitter the most trouble is stuff thrown inside by a left-handed pitcher," Manuel says. "If you're a switch hitter, that problem is eliminated."

Manuel agrees that it would be a problem asking a player at the Major League level to become a switch hitter.

"That would be very difficult because Major League hitters have already mastered their skills from one side of the plate," he says.

Otherwise, says Manuel, there are always a few players who look like they could be turned into switch hitters.

"Herbert Perry is one," Manuel says. "He has a really good swing from the left side. In the batting cage, he's a pretty good left-handed hitter."

While managing at Class AA with the Minnesota organization several years ago, Manuel had five switch hitters on his team.

"It was great," he says. "You didn't care who the other team's pitcher was because you could always match up well with the switch

hitters. It made our bench really strong."

Manuel said one way to identify a minor leaguer who might become a switch hitter is by watching his mechanics at the plate.

"If a guy looks coordinated and well balanced on his one side, that might be a guy you try as a switch hitter," he says.

Vizquel fit that description. Yet in 1989, his rookie year with the Mariners, and his rookie year as a switch



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson

**Like Vizquel,
most switch
hitters are not
born switch
hitters, they
become switch
hitters after
they become
professionals.**

hitter, it was still a struggle.

"There were times when I wanted to quit," he says. "When you're hitting .200 and not seeing any results, it's real hard to be patient. But the Mariners never rushed me. They were patient, and it paid off."

In his first year as a switch hitter, Vizquel batted .220. He's gotten progressively better each year since then.

Like Vizquel, most switch hitters are not born switch hitters. They become switch hitters after they become professionals.

Robertson says the number of switch hitters he sees in scouting high school and college players is diminishing.

"It seems like we see less and less of them,"



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson

he says. "In fact, it's rare when we see a switch hitter."

Why aren't more kids starting to switch hit from a young age?

"I think kids have enough trouble learning how to hit one way properly, let alone two," Robertson says.

Even when Robertson or one of his scouts sees a switch hitter in amateur baseball, it's not always as exciting as it might seem.

"We don't necessarily get turned on by a lot of the switch hitters we see because in a lot of cases, they're so weak from one side of the plate that you wonder why they even bother," Robertson says. "The last two I saw who I really felt could do it were Gregg Jefferies and Chipper Jones. Outside of them, there haven't been many."



**PARK, DINE, PLAY. THE
TAKE THE AVENUE**

Robertson said when one of his scouts sees a switch hitter, the scout will usually make a recommendation that the player only hit from his best side.

"Some guys who are switch hitters are really only good hitters from one side," he says. "They are 'outs' on the other side of the plate. That's like the old scouting joke, where you say 'he's a .300 hitter—.150 from each side of the plate.'"

Shapiro says the Indians generally have one minor leaguer per year who attempts to become a switch hitter. Last year's experiment was shortstop Damian Jackson, who at the time was at Class AA Canton-Akron. That experiment failed after a couple of months when Jackson said he'd rather stick to hitting right-handed.



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson

At the big league level, Vizquel, Baerga, and Murray give the Indians three switch hitters, which makes it difficult for opposing teams' managers to create favorable late-inning matchups for their relief pitchers.

Mechanically, it's very rare for a switch hitter to have any radical changes in his mechanics from one side of the plate to the other. Vizquel says when he became a

switch hitter, he tried to duplicate his right-handed swing and stance from the left side.

"But my right hand is my dominant hand, so from the left side, I tend to hit more fly balls than I do from the right," he says.

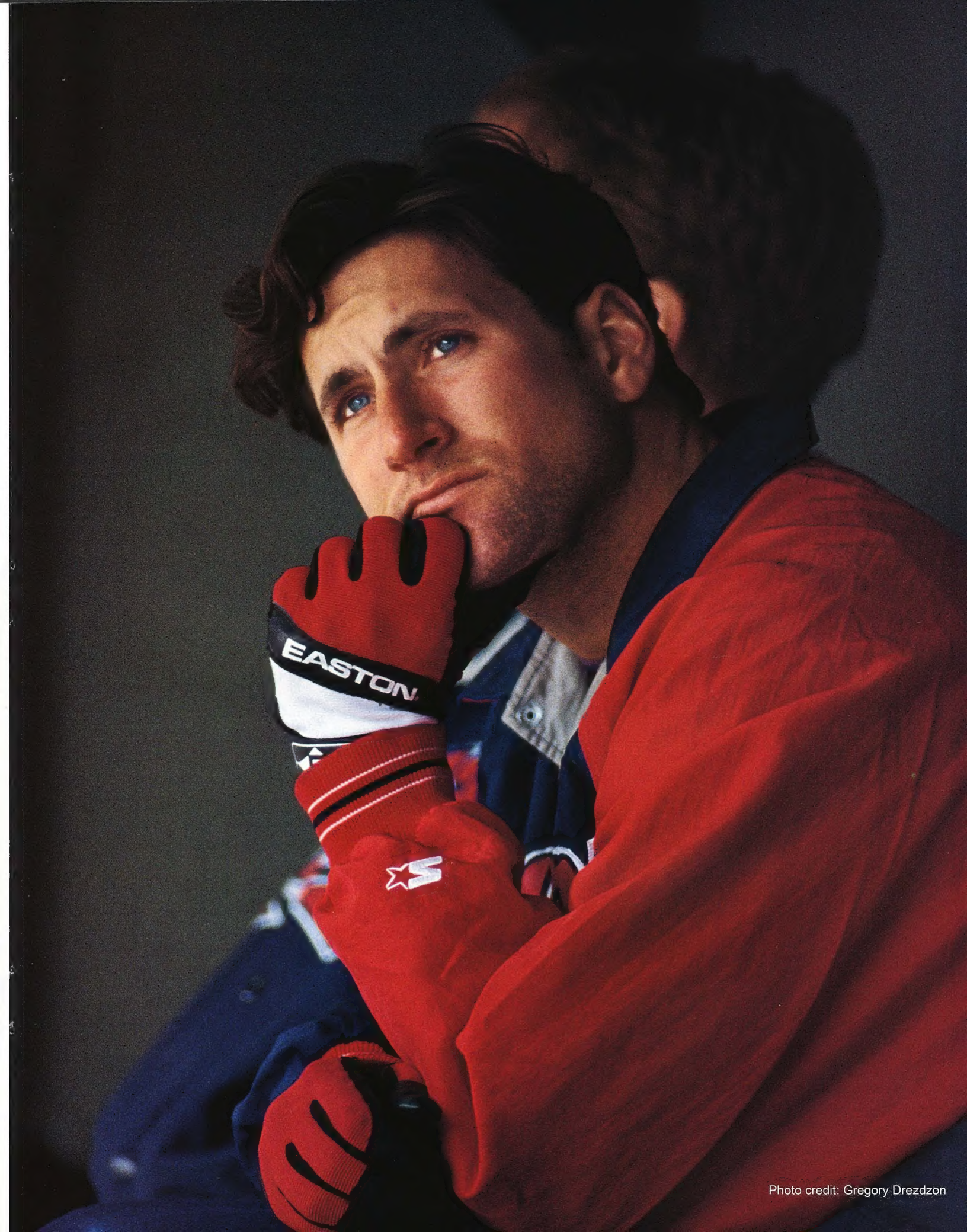
Manuel says there are only subtle differences between the stances Baerga and Murray use

**Mechanically,
it's very rare
for a switch
hitter to have
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of the plate to
the other.**

THE BASE

**FUN STARTS HERE.
TO THE BALLPARK.**





"Ever since we drafted Charlie, we've always felt he was a guy who knew how to win... He's a tremendous competitor..."
—Dan O'Dowd

describe what it's like," he says. "You'd think the College World Series or something in your past would get you ready for it, but nothing does. Being in the World Series was 10 times more exciting than anything else I've ever experienced."

Though he's just 29, Nagy has experienced a lot in his pitching career. From the heights of being a first round draft pick and being on the U.S. Olympic team, to the depths of a career-threatening shoulder surgery.

Nagy has enjoyed and survived it all. And all the time there's been one constant.

Winning.

In what was essentially a bad year for him in most of 1995, Nagy still won 16 games. In 1996, he was the first American League pitcher to win 10 games. From June 28 of last year to June 10 of this year, Nagy's record (counting the post-season) was 23-3.

"Ever since we drafted Charlie, we've always felt he was a guy who knew how to win," says O'Dowd. "In every game you pitch there are always three or four

sequences when a pitcher really has to make a good pitch to get a key out. What separates the .500 pitchers from the winning pitchers is that winning pitchers can make those pitches when they have to. Charlie is one of those guys who can make those pitches. He's a tremendous competitor. Even when he's not going well he gets a

lot out of himself. He's just a winner."

The Indians knew that from the day they first started scouting Nagy at the University of Connecticut. Born in Fairfield, CT, Nagy originally enrolled at Cornell University, where he intended to play both baseball and football (he was a defensive back in football). However, after one year at Cornell, he transferred to Connecticut.

"There were a lot of reasons why I transferred," he says. "The big one was that I just felt more comfortable there."

At Connecticut, Nagy quickly established himself as the ace of the Huskies' staff. As a sophomore and junior, he was named Big East "Pitcher of the Year." His career stats at Connecticut don't knock your eyes out, although he did average 12.6 strikeouts per nine innings.

One of Connecticut's big rivals at the time was Seton Hall, led by first baseman Mo Vaughn, now with the Red Sox.

"John Valentin was also on that team with Mo," Nagy says. "The thing I remember most about facing Mo back then was a home run he hit off me in the Big East Tournament. I'm not sure how far it went. All I remember was seeing it disappear into the darkness."

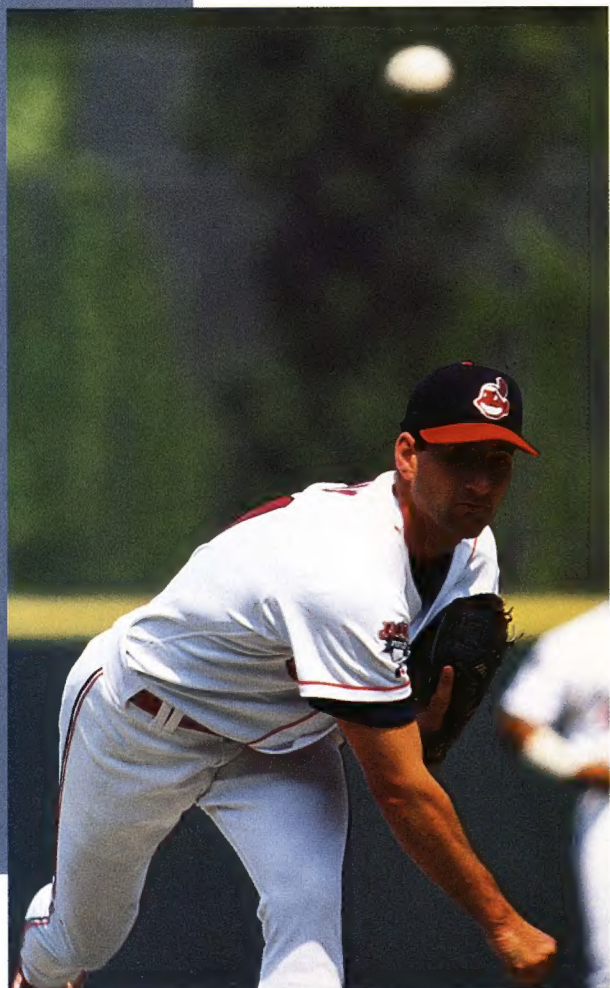
In the summer of 1988, Nagy, in quick order, was selected by the Indians in the first round of the June Draft, and selected as a member of the U.S. Olympic team that won a Gold Medal in Seoul, South Korea.

Nagy actually was a reliever on that Olympic team, which had a starting rotation that included future big leaguers Andy Benes, Jim Abbott, and Ben McDonald.

"That whole summer was a great time for me," Nagy says. "On the Olympic team we got to go to Italy, Japan twice, and Korea. We traveled all around the country and all around the world."

More than that, Nagy was able to further polish his pitching skills, which was important because his Olympic obligation prevented him from playing in the Indians minor league system in 1988.

"I think the competition we played with on the Olympic team that summer was equivalent to Double-A ball in the minor leagues," Nagy says. "It was a great



Credit: Gregory Drezdron, all photos

"When you have success like that at the start of your career, you think 'Gee, if my whole career goes like this it would be great.' But baseball can be a humbling game."

—Charles Nagy

experience for me because I learned a lot about pitching. Before the Olympics, I just went out there and tried to strike out everybody. In the Olympics I learned what pitching was all about."

Nagy was a good student.

His first year in the Indians organization was 1989. Playing at Class-A Kinston (North Carolina), he was 8-4, with a 1.51 ERA, and was named the Carolina League "Pitcher of the Year," even though he was promoted to Class AA Canton-Akron at mid-season.

One of the unusual twists to Nagy's career is that he has never pitched an inning at Class AAA. He finished the 1989 season at Canton-Akron, and began the next season there as well.

On June 27, 1990, Nagy was called up by the Indians from Canton-Akron. Two days later he made his Major League debut against the California Angels, whose starting pitcher was Abbott,

Nagy's Olympic teammate.

Nagy lost the game, and was later returned to Canton-Akron. But he was recalled by the Indians later that season, and he has been here ever since.

Not many pitchers make a successful jump from Class AA to the big leagues. But not many pitchers are like Nagy.

O'Dowd says one reason Nagy never pitched at Class AAA is that the Indians Triple-A farm team was at Colorado Springs that year, and Tribe officials were wary of sending top pitching prospects to the high altitude of the Rocky Mountains, where their ERAs were likely to soar and their confidence would plunge.

"The other factor," says O'Dowd, "is that we weren't a very good team that year, so we figured we might as well get some benefit out of that season, and if we could get Charlie broken in at the Major League level, the bad year would have served some purpose."

The strategy worked.

As a rookie in 1991, Nagy led the team in victories with a record of 10-15, and he pitched 211 innings, which is still the second highest total of his career.

The next year, Nagy was 17-10 with a 2.96 ERA. He was selected to the American League All-Star team. Life was good.

"When you have success like that at the start of your career, you think, 'Gee, if my whole career goes like this it would be great,'" Nagy says. "But baseball can be a humbling game."

Nagy got humbled in a catastrophic 1993 season. In the space of three months, one of his best friends, Tribe pitcher Steve Olin, was killed in a spring training boating accident, he came down with a case of shingles, and in June he underwent shoulder surgery.

"It was a miserable year for me," Nagy says. "The surgery was scary because I wondered if I'd ever pitch again. Something like that puts everything in perspective—you learn you're not invincible."

The '93 season was a washout for Nagy, but he bounced back with a 10-8 record in 1994.

Then last year, he struggled for much of the year, only to finally put all the pieces together for a strong finish, which he's carried over into 1996.

Wiley says Nagy's up and down 1995 season was due more to his thought process than his mechanics.

"Charlie was giving the hitters too much credit," Wiley says. "He was feeling like



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdzen

he had to make every pitch he threw an out. But it's a long season, and everyone goes through stretches like that."

Nagy came out of his, and proof of the Indians belief in Nagy came in the off-season when he became a free agent. The Indians wasted little time in resigning him to a two-year contract, with an option for a third year.

"I didn't have an interest in going anywhere else," Nagy says. "But in baseball, you never know. I never thought about signing with another team. The Indians have treated me well and I really enjoy it here, playing for the team and living in the city."

As one of the senior members of the Indians, Nagy has been able to appreciate the climb from a 100-game loser in 1991 to the American League Champions in '95.

"When I go to functions with players from other teams, they're always asking me what it's like to play in Cleveland, and talk about how much they'd like to play here," Nagy says. "That kind of talk was a shock to me, because I'd never heard it before."

And the World Series was something

Nagy had never experienced before.

Until last year.

"It took a couple of weeks after the Series was over for it to sink in that I was actually part of it," Nagy says. "One day I woke up and said, 'Hey, I was in the World Series!'"



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdzon

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Chel Cox

by Tom Bochenek

They visit each American League city twice during a regular season. That includes two trips to the west coast, a pair of ventures into Canada, countless time zone changes, and innumerable itineraries that get everybody to the right destination on time.

So, you want to take a road trip with the Cleveland Indians? Tag along.

Road trips begin long before the plane actually takes off. They start in the office of Mike Seghi, Director of Team Travel, who works in advance of each trip. Arrangements must be made for airports, hotels, and buses to say the least. Time schedules must be abided in order to keep a sleepless team and its bosses happy.

Seghi is just one of two front office staffers who travel with the team on a regular basis. While Seghi handles all of the trip arrangements, Bart Swain takes care of the team's media and community relations obligations. He also keeps the coaching staff informed with daily statistics and news around the league.

Swain is Manager of Media Relations, and, like manager Mike Hargrove, he wears many hats while on the road. Life on the road is not exactly a way of getting out of the office for a few days.

"Basically, I'm like an island out there, I pretty much do it all," said Swain who takes an occasional 'vacation' from the road when Media Relations Assistant Joel Gunderson represents the organization. "I book interviews, set up visits with children who are ill, and make sure the coaching staff has all the information they need.

"Segs (Seghi) and I are the ones who handle things."

Unless the Indians have one of their 17 off days (not including the three-day All-Star break), a road trip begins moments after the last out of a homestand at Jacobs Field. These "getaway" days don't afford much

time to savor a win or contemplate a loss. Two buses are ready to transport the team, staff, and media to the airport for their flight to the next destination. On a rare off day, the Indians depart the next evening (of the off day).

The Indians travel in style. While there is no formal dress code, the team and staff are required to wear sport coats en route (no blue jeans allowed). Also, there is no limit to the amount of luggage each player can take, in part because the organization is well prepared for a road trip.

"We are traveling heavier this year than we have in the past," Swain pointed out. "We never used to travel with a video recorder and monitor (enabling players to watch their at-bats during the game in the clubhouse). And that's bulky. Also, each player has his own workout gear that has to go along.

"In addition, we've added a radio engineer this year. The more people, the

A lot goes on behind the scenes at Jacobs Field, so when the team is on the road, everyone rests, right? Well, not exactly... For some, the work just goes into their suitcase!

Below: Bart Swain and Joel Gunderson



Photo credit: Gregory Drezdson, all photos

HOW TO SCORE

Baseball fans can enjoy the sport to the fullest extent by keeping track of the game and pinpointing those big plays that bring victory or defeat. All you need is a basic knowledge of the rules.

Although there are countless scoring methods, experts use a simple code based on numbering players by position and tracing action through the use of symbols. It's easy and fun.

In fact, why not devise your own scoring system with the basic suggestions on this page.

One such suggestion on player substitutions is to use a heavy or wavy line under or over a box to indicate a change, either of a player or batter.

If a batter flies to the rightfielder, merely use the figure 9. If it is a foul fly, use 9F.

Now that you are an official "scorer," you can really enjoy baseball games.

Team	Pos.	1	2
Rightfielder	9	4-6 W	
2nd Baseman	4	3 ④FO	
1st Baseman	3	=	
Centerfielder	8	SF 8	
Designated Hitter	DH	K	
Leftfielder	7		4-6
Catcher	2		DP 4-6-3
3rd Baseman	5		≡
Shortstop	6		7
Pitcher	1		
TOTALS	R / H	1 / 1	1 / 2

Walked and was forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop).

Reached first on fielder's choice when runner was forced out, advanced to third on double by 3rd place hitter, scored on 4th place hitter's sacrifice fly.

Doubled; did not advance further.

Flied out to center field scoring runner on third.

Struck out—end of the inning.

Singled; later forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop in first half of double play).

Hit into double play (2nd baseman to shortstop to 1st baseman).

Hit home run.

Flied out to leftfielder—end of inning.

USE THESE SYMBOLS FOR PLAYS

— Single	FC Fielder's Choice	PB Passed Ball
= Double	HP Hit by Pitcher	BK Balk
≡ Triple	WP Wild Pitch	K Struck Out
≡ Home Run	SB Stolen Base	BB Base on Balls
E Error	SH Sacrifice Hit	FO Forced Out
F Foul Fly	SF Sacrifice Fly	IW Intentional Walk
DP Double Play	CS Caught Stealing	

CAN YOU SCORE

THIS PLAY?

The ball was hit to the shortstop, who threw it to the second baseman. The second baseman was able to force out the runner who had been at first. He then threw the ball to the first baseman to get the batter out, turning a double play.

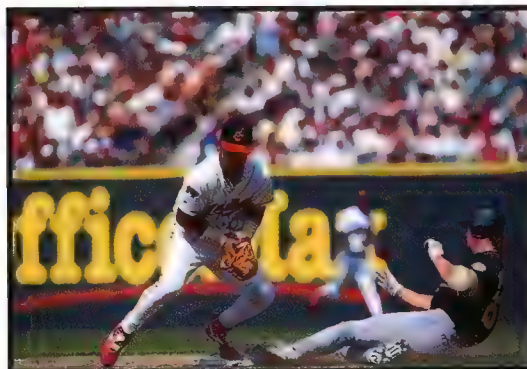
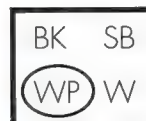


Photo credit: Gregory Drezdov



In this example, the hitter reached first base on a walk, stole second, advanced to third on pitcher's balk, scored on a wild pitch.

The Gatekeepers

By Tom Bochenek

One gentleman simply does his job by following procedures, and once received front page notoriety in the sports section. Another gentleman simply does his job by assisting others.

Such are the varied job descriptions of the ballpark ushers. They are the dutifully attired men and women who show up at Jacobs Field five hours before game time, are in their assigned positions once the

gates open, and are responsible for assisting fans and knowing the ins and outs of the ballpark.

Indeed, they are special employees of Andy Frain Services, the company that provides game day ushers, ticket takers, and security. Two of those special workers are out of sight of the fans, but are as much a part of the scene as a sellout crowd at Jacobs Field.

Joseph A. Corrado began as an usher at Cleveland Stadium in 1949, a year after the Indians won the World Championship in 1948. That means for almost half this century, Corrado has witnessed the glorious and not so glorious times of the Indians.

Angelo F. Muraco started as an usher during Browns games at Cleveland Stadium in 1970, and in 1977, he switched to baseball.

In 1990, Muraco became a press box attendant, the person who checked all media credentials at the ramp leading from the concourse to the press box behind home plate. Corrado soon joined him in the important position of assisting media and special guests who sat in the loges.

With the move to Jacobs Field, Corrado and Muraco retained their positions in the press box with the added duties of assisting fans who now mix with the media as they venture to their private suites.

Memories to these veterans are portraits in their eyes and tape recordings in their ears. They are exact and permanent.

"The nice things always stay with you," said the 74-year-old Muraco.

For Joe and Angelo, as they are tagged by the media and organization as if they were a presidential ticket running for office, it has meant a lifetime of



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson

happiness in their vocations. Vocations for sure, since both are retired: Corrado was a steel worker at U.S. Steel for 30 years, and Muraco was a mechanic at Cleveland Railway System and worked in research at NASA for 30 years.

"We've seen the closing of the old Stadium and the opening of the new ball park—that's a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Corrado, 81, who was born and raised in Cleveland and is the oldest active usher at Jacobs Field.

"Most people are nice, I'd say 99 percent of them," said Muraco, who moved from Pittsburgh to Cleveland in 1930. "It's been a tremendous experience."

Experience may sound trivial, but next to the word 'no' it is the most important asset an usher or press box attendant must possess. Following the policies of the organization also helps.

"When the Jacobs' (Richard and his late brother David) bought the team," Corrado said, "there was a gray-haired fellow who came up the ramp. He said, 'My name is Martin Cleary and I'm the President of Jacobs, Visconsi, and Jacobs.'"

"He went on to say, 'These are the do's and the don'ts.' He told us what he wanted—the way the Jacobs' wanted it—and we agreed to do exactly that. We were told nobody goes into the Jacobs'loge (25C) unless they have a pass or a ticket."

"A couple of weeks later," Joe recalled, "a fellow, who looked like a big football player, came up the ramp and Angelo and I stopped him. He gave us his name and he said he wanted to see the Jacobs'."

"I said, 'I don't know who you are, but I'll find out if they want to see you'—then he took out his credentials and showed me who he was. I said, 'Well, I'll let you in.' Mr. Richard Jacobs later came out and said with a laugh, 'Joe,

you did a good job.'"

"One thing about the Indians executives," Joe strongly pointed out, "if they come by, they will say hello. (Executive Vice President, General Manager) John Hart, (Director of Baseball Operations/Assistant GM) Dan O'Dowd, (Executive Vice President, Business) Dennis Lehman—they will greet you, say hello, how are you... I think it's great."

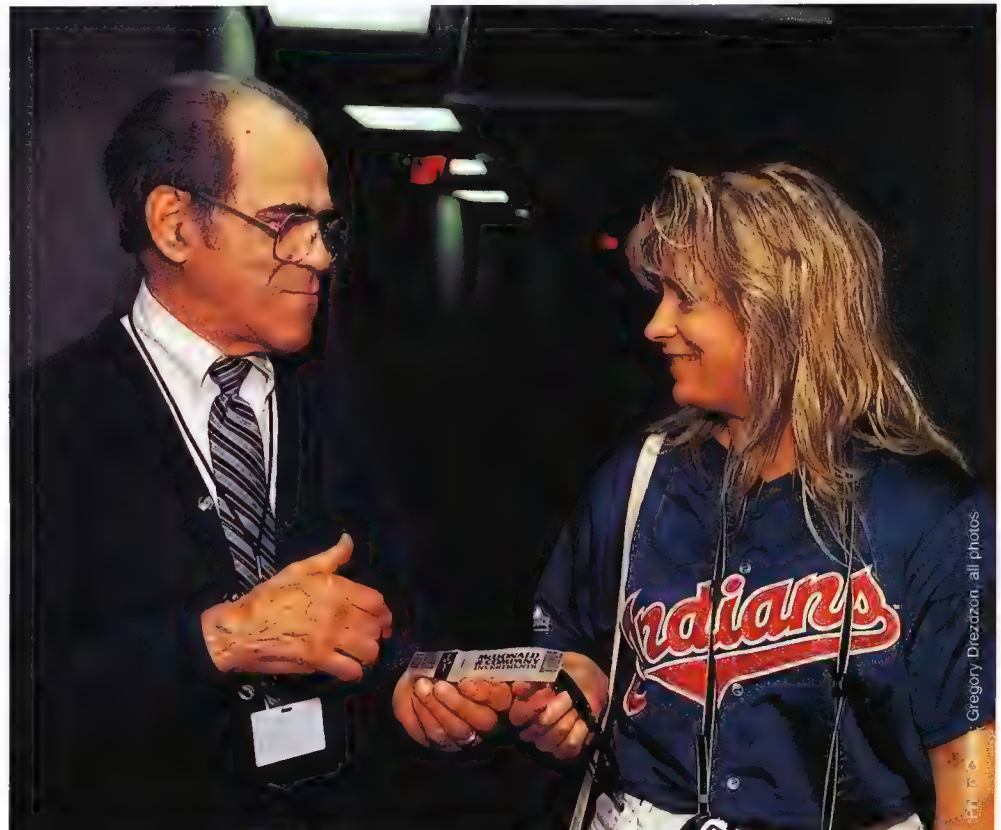
"I think this is what makes us live longer, too... baseball and seeing all these great things."

One of those great things was last year's playoffs and World Series. For Joe and Angelo, the avalanche of world-wide media and the security of guarding the press box tested their job descriptions.

"Our job is to familiarize them (the media) with the press box, answer any questions they have, resolve any problems, or direct them to the person who can help them," said Angelo. "There is a seating arrangement and we point it out to them."

"Last year, with the playoffs and World Series, you took the situation (for a regular season game) and multiplied it by ten. It was like an ant hill up here."

"It's a little different than at the old Stadium. There are so many people coming and going, and you've got to check each individual."
—Angelo Muraco



Gregory Diezazon, all photos

"What really draws me is that I enjoy all the people. You see many different personalities every day. It's a fantastic experience..."
—Angelo Muraco

American League team, first baseman Vic Wertz and third baseman Al Rosen.

Simple moments that took place decades ago remain fresh in Joe's and Angelo's memory.

"There was a little girl who was blind that wanted to meet Rosen," Joe related. "To watch her enthusiasm, well, it made her day—I had tears in my eyes. Now, that's a nice thing to see. The following year, she came back with her dad and Rosen talked to her again.

"Billy Martin came out one day—he was between jobs—but he was working for the Yankees," Joe added. "Two little kids wanted to see him, so I went into the press box, got Billy, and he came out and talked to them—he put his arms around them and signed autographs.

"I said, 'Billy, that was awfully nice of you to talk to those two little kids,' and he said, 'Those are our future fans—we'd better take care of them.'"

"Along that line," Angelo said, "there was a young girl from a local school who was writing an article about baseball. She contacted Bob Feller, and he agreed to do an interview with her. He sat in the stands with her below the ramp at the Stadium and talked to her for about 20 minutes. I thought that was nice—he could have been watching the game or doing other things—but he took the time to talk to her and tell her things about League Park, so that was great."

What's also great is the continuing service that ushers like Joe and Angelo provide on a daily basis at Jacobs Field. They're like boxing referees—when they do their job, they go unnoticed. Which is fine for the typical usher.

"What really draws me," said Angelo, "is that I enjoy all the people. You see many different personalities every day. It's a fantastic experience..."

Don't miss out on a great lineup this summer!

Join the Cleveland Indians at the Cleveland Marriott Society Center for the Cleveland Indians Charities Luncheon Series. Each luncheon features former Indians heroes and current Tribe favorites.

Mark these CIC luncheon dates on your calendar:

- July 19 Burners of the Basepaths
- Aug. 16 Masters of the Mound

Single event tickets are \$30.

For more information, or to make your reservation please contact the Indians Community Relations Department at (216) 420-4400.





MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND THE INDIANS MAKE "TEAM" A WINNER

Baseball's most important pitch this season won't come from a mound. In an effort to combat drinking and driving, Major League Baseball, together with the Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM) coalition, will make a comprehensive appeal to fans this year. The message:

PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.

Major League Baseball joined TEAM in 1987. Fourteen organizations are now members of the coalition, representing professional sports, federal and state agencies, and private industry. In addition to Major League Baseball, Allstate Insurance Company, CBS Sports, Comsat Video Enterprises, the International Association of Auditorium Managers, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Association of Governor's Highway Safety Representatives, the National Basketball Association, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the National Traffic Safety Administration, the National Hockey League, and the National Safety Council are members.

TEAM was established to accomplish two objectives:

- Assist ballparks and arenas in the development of alcohol management policies and procedures.
- Conduct public service campaigns that reinforce awareness of the dangers associated with drinking and driving. These campaigns promote the value of a designated driver and the importance of responsible drinking.

As part of the TEAM program, each Major League club has reviewed its alcohol policies. Every club is running public service announcements asking fans to drink responsibly and warning them against the consequences of drinking and driving.

The results have been encouraging. The number of alcohol-related incidents in and around baseball parks has dropped.

Baseball's efforts also include a multi-media public service announcement campaign that promoted "TEAM Spirit" on television during network telecasts of regular and post-season games. TEAM PSA's over the years have featured Tommy Lasorda, Mark Langston, Shane Rawley, Chili Davis, and Don Baylor encouraging fans not to drink and drive.

The Indians have also been a leader when it comes to safe, responsible drinking at Jacobs Field. All hosts, guest service personnel, security guards, ticket sellers, and parking lot attendants are trained in spotting the signs of intoxication among fans and how to control and prevent alcohol-related incidents. In addition, there are

banners behind concession stands encouraging fans to drink responsibly and to choose a designated driver in their group. Those interested in participating in the Designated Driver program, **sponsored by A1 General**, may sign up at Guest Service Centers, Section 116 of the Main Concourse or Section 519 of the Upper Concourse, to receive a free soft drink certificate, a wristband saying they aren't purchasing alcohol, and a chance to win an Indians baseball cap from the Team Shop.

The Cleveland Indians want you safe, because we want you back. Please drink responsibly.



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson, 1995

AMERICAN LEAGUE
Champions



**If you want to wear official
Major League apparel,
you can come to
the Indians Team Shop.**

**Or you can work your way up
through the minors.**

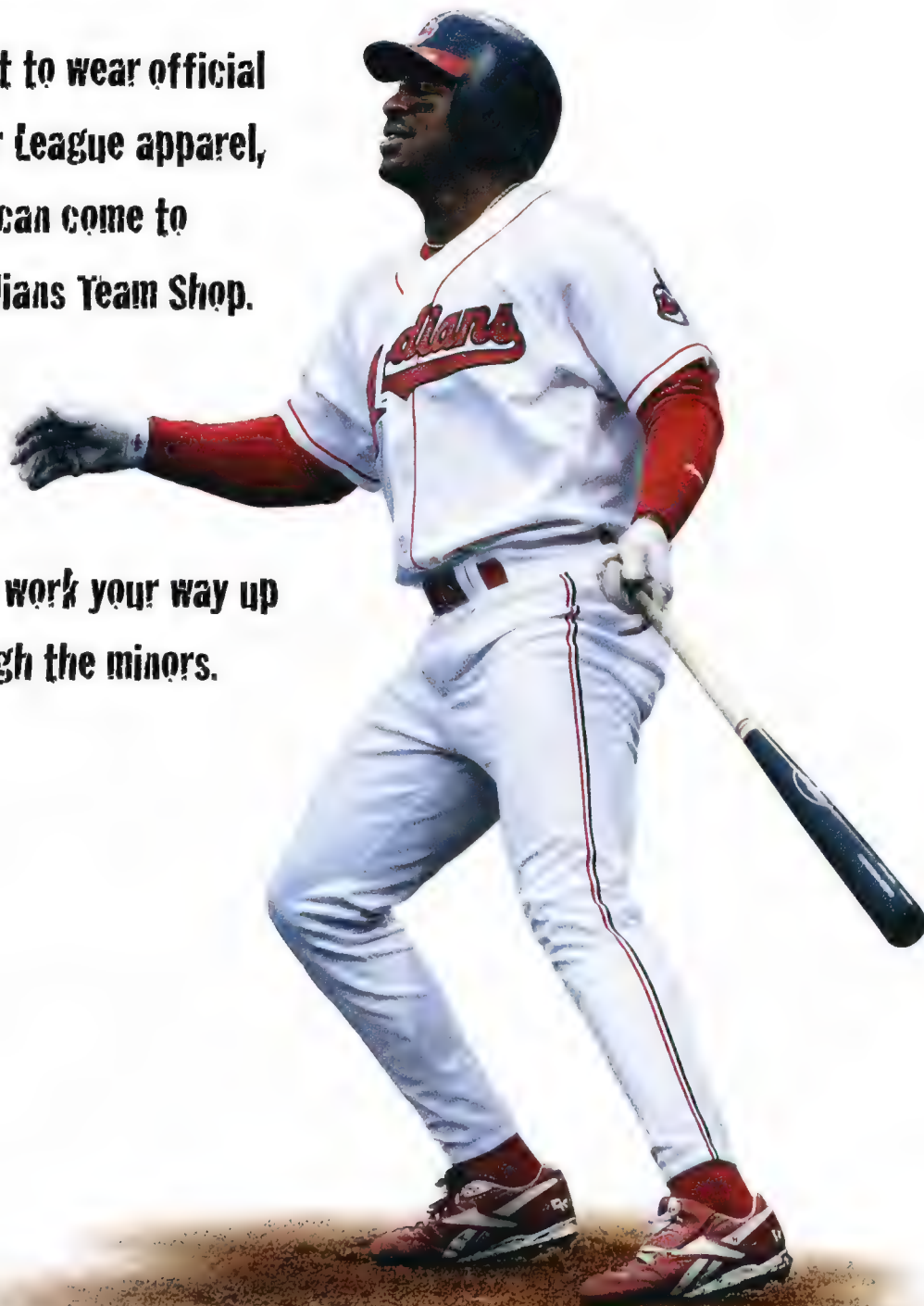


Photo: Gregory Drezdzen

All-Star slugger Albert Belle spent 2½ years in the Tribe farm system before he put on an Indians uniform. But you just have to spend a few minutes at the Indians Team Shops. Because here, you can get official Tribe jerseys, and caps just like the players wear. You can also get t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, jackets, baseballs, pennants, flags, videos, children's items and novelties too. So stock up for the new season while the selection is good. Visit the Indians Team Shop at Jacobs Field, the Galleria at Erieview or Belden Village Mall in Canton. To order by phone, call 216-420-GIFT or 1-800-38-TRIBE.

And we'll have you looking like a real pro.



Jacobs Field 420-4444 Hours: Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sun. Noon - 5 p.m.
Galleria 420-4443 Hours: Mon. - Fri. 10 a.m. - 7:30 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Sun. Noon - 5 p.m.
Belden Village 497-8088 Hours: Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

ROAD, CONT.

"In this day and age of the success of the Indians, we're sifting through the requests.

That's a major change, and it's probably had the single biggest effect on our jobs."

**—Indians VP,
Public Relations
Bob DiBiasio**

Eddie showed me which restaurants were good, and which weren't. He took me under his wing and showed me how to get along in Detroit."

The Indians popularity has added to the workload of the public and media relations department.

"On the west coast, we get a lot more requests for players to make appearances," said Swain who follows up on the initial contact from the community relations office. "There are a lot of *Make-a-Wish Foundation* requests and we try to accommodate all of them.

Ah, yes, but what about Swain's primary job when traveling with the team—the media? When your team is the defending American League Champion, well, uh, the secret is out.

"The media crunch," said Bob DiBiasio, Vice President, Public Relations, "is reflective of the team. Therefore, everybody wants our guys for a 6 o'clock live shot in their city or the national media will catch up to us when we go to California.

"Before," said DiBiasio who traveled with the team during the 1970's and '80s, "we used to beg people to take advan-

tage of our guys. We were the ones calling Roy Firestone at 'Up Close.' Sometimes it worked—sometimes it didn't. Now they're coming to us, and Bart and Joel can pick and choose who we need to get our players in front of. Back then, you were truly more of a traveling PR guy out there trying to drum up business.

"In this day and age of the success of the Indians, we're sifting through the requests. That's a major change and it's probably had the single biggest effect on our jobs."

Said Swain, "Fortunately, I got to know a lot of national media during the World Series, so their faces aren't as unfamiliar as they would have been. Obviously, some guys aren't going to talk, so I try to steer the media away from them.

"I try to direct them toward players that I think are good stories—that they would enjoy writing about. Then, there's about 800,000 sports radio stations—you just can't take care of everybody. It's hard, but you try to take care of the ones that did things with you in the past, are reputable, and are going to hit a wide audience."

"It's just different because the jobs that are spaced among three or four people here, you're doing solo on the road," said Gunderson. "The first time was a little overwhelming, to say the least."

When he gets to a city, Swain can expect an average of nine messages for interview requests. If it's Anaheim, that means an appearance on ESPN's "Up Close;" in New York, it's a stop on "Talkin' Baseball With Ed Randall."

Swain and Gunderson make interview arrangements for radio, TV, and newspapers from their hotel room, which functions as a second office. Both rely on their constant companion, the telephone, and the machine that does the daily work, the laptop computer.

"People say I'm lucky because I get to travel," said Gunderson. "Basically, the only things I see are the four walls of my hotel room. You set up an office there and one at the ballpark."

"There're seven pages of game notes to do every day," Swain said.

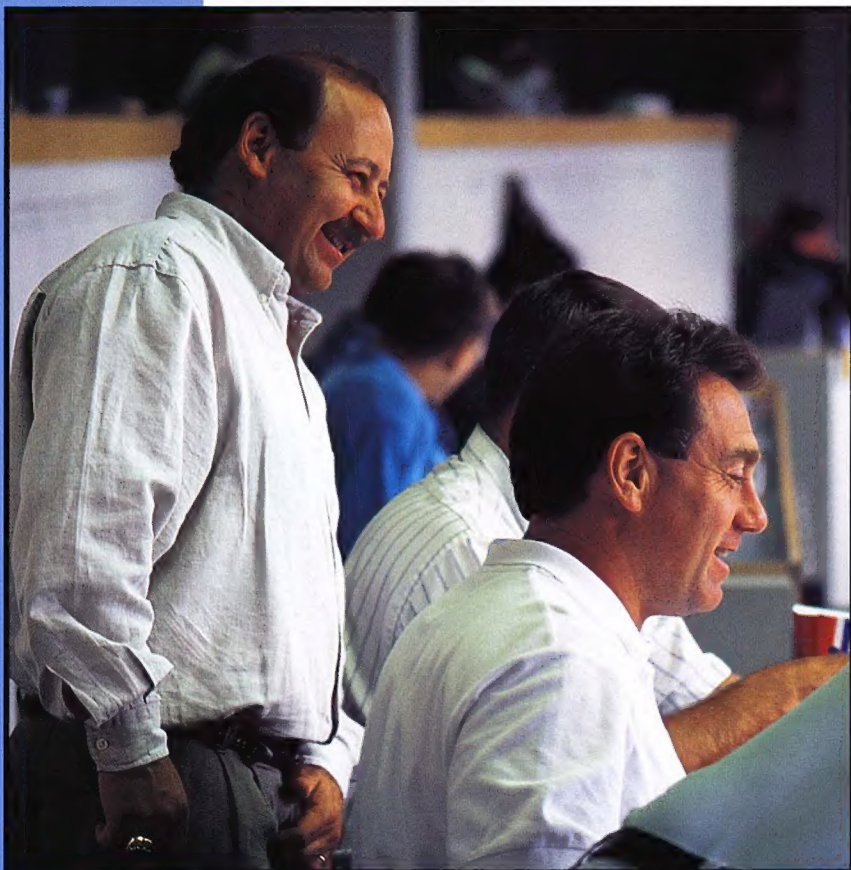


Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdzen

But, don't get the impression that Swain has the best seat in the house in the press box.

"It takes three hours a day to do the notes, and I update them during the game," he added. "During the game, I'll do notes on the next game pitcher, but everything else, I've got to change.

"I don't watch a whole lot of the game when I'm on the road. I try to use that three-hour block to get the majority of the notes done, make phone calls, plus I've got voice mail here (in Cleveland) that's ringing off the hook."

After the game, it's back to the hotel and back to the computer.

"I try to do about an hour's worth of notes," Swain said. "I get up at 9am and finish the notes, which takes another two-and-a-half hours. I'll try to catch a workout, all the while returning calls because the phone is ringing like crazy. The notes wouldn't take as long if there were no phones. Also, players call me a lot on the road if they need something."

Said Gunderson of the game notes, "We do pretty extensive notes. In Cleveland, Bart and I split them, but, when you're on the road, you're doing *all* the pages yourself. Juggling between that, the phone calls, the coaches and players stats packages, and advance scouting reports, the game notes—which are one of our primary duties—almost become an after-thought."

The media relations staff, for sure, is happy to see the offices back at Jacobs Field.

"After a road trip," Gunderson said, "you're exhausted. It almost takes a couple of days to recuperate, but then you have home games.

"It's just like rolling down a hill," said Swain. "It picks up speed... I drink a lot of coffee on the road."

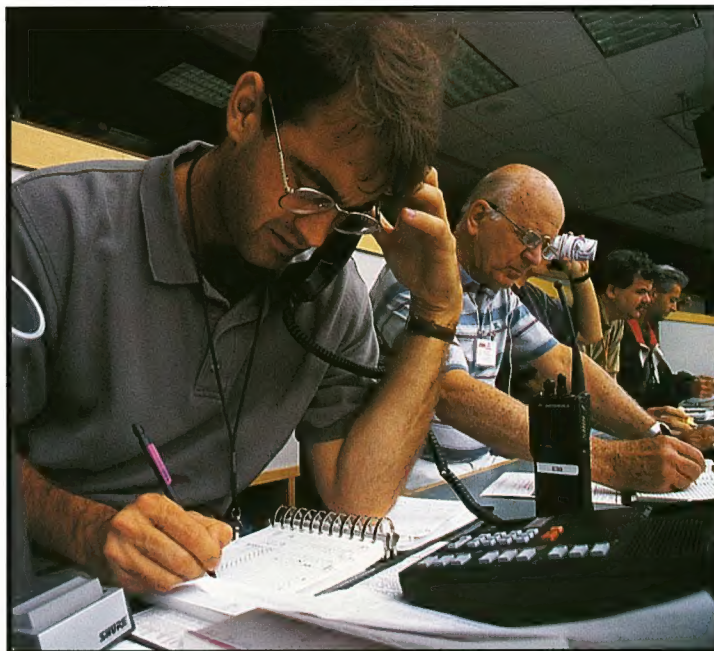


Photo Credit: Gregory Dreitzon

THE BEST OF... AL ROAD CITIES

BEST PRESS BOX VIEW— Anaheim Stadium

WORST PRESS BOX VIEW— Tiger Stadium (It's all the way on the roof)

BEST BALLPARK— Oriole Park at Camden Yards (other than Jacobs Field, of course!)

BEST NOSTALGIC BALLPARK— Fenway Park

MOST SCENIC CITY— Seattle, WA

SECOND MOST SCENIC CITY— Minneapolis, MN

BEST DOME — Skydome (Toronto)

BEST PLACE TO SPEND AN OFF DAY— New York City

SECOND BEST PLACE TO SPEND AN OFF DAY— Arlington, TX (Six Flags & Wet-n-Wild)

BEST FOOD— Chicago

BEST CITY FOR SEAFOOD— Seattle (Baltimore is a close second)

FAVORITE RESTAURANT FOR FOOD— Obrycki's Crab House (Baltimore)

FAVORITE RESTAURANT FOR ATMOSPHERE— Fishbones (Detroit)

FAVORITE ROAD HOTEL— The Atheneum (Detroit)

FAVORITE CONCERT VENUE— First Avenue (Minneapolis)

BEST NIGHTLIFE— Chicago

FRIENDLIEST PEOPLE— Minneapolis

BEST CITY TO JOG— Toronto, Ontario (along the harbor)

SECOND BEST CITY TO JOG— Baltimore, MD (It's hot & Ft. McHenry is about three miles away)

THE PLAYERS



Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdson

BOTTOM OF THE NINTH

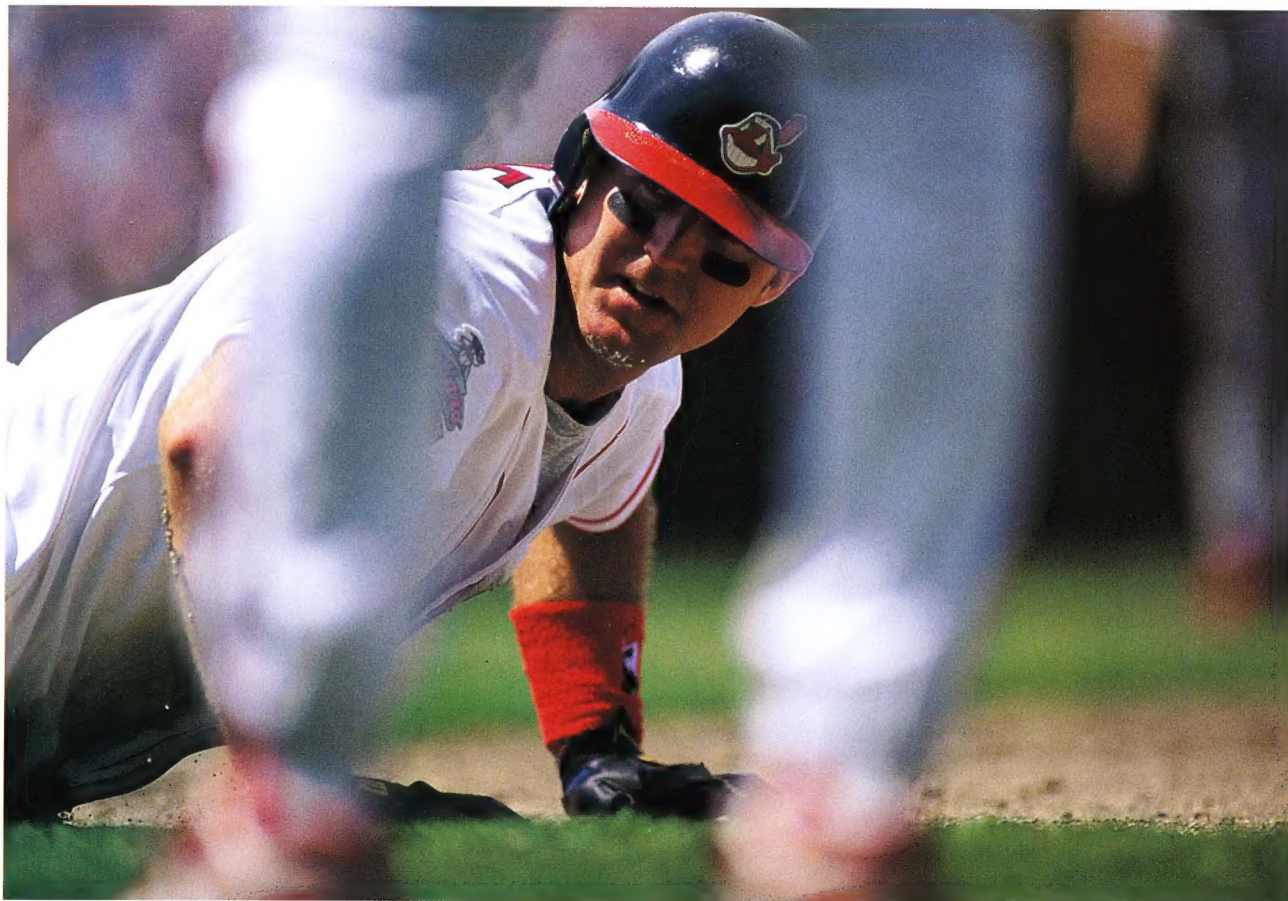


Photo Credit: Gregory Drezdron

Drop and give me Twenty!

